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**From:** Verhalen, Frances [verhalen.frances@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 8/27/2020 8:20:05 PM  
**To:** Casso, Ruben [Casso.Ruben@epa.gov]; Robinson, Jeffrey [Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov]; Garcia, David [Garcia.David@epa.gov]; Ngo, Kim [Ngo.Kim@epa.gov]  
**CC:** Riddick, Nia [Riddick.Nia@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** RE: EPA Wants to Convey 'Credible' Ethylene Oxide Risks to Public  
**Attachments:** Letter to Sen Carper 082720.pdf

Here is the letter that is linked to the article.

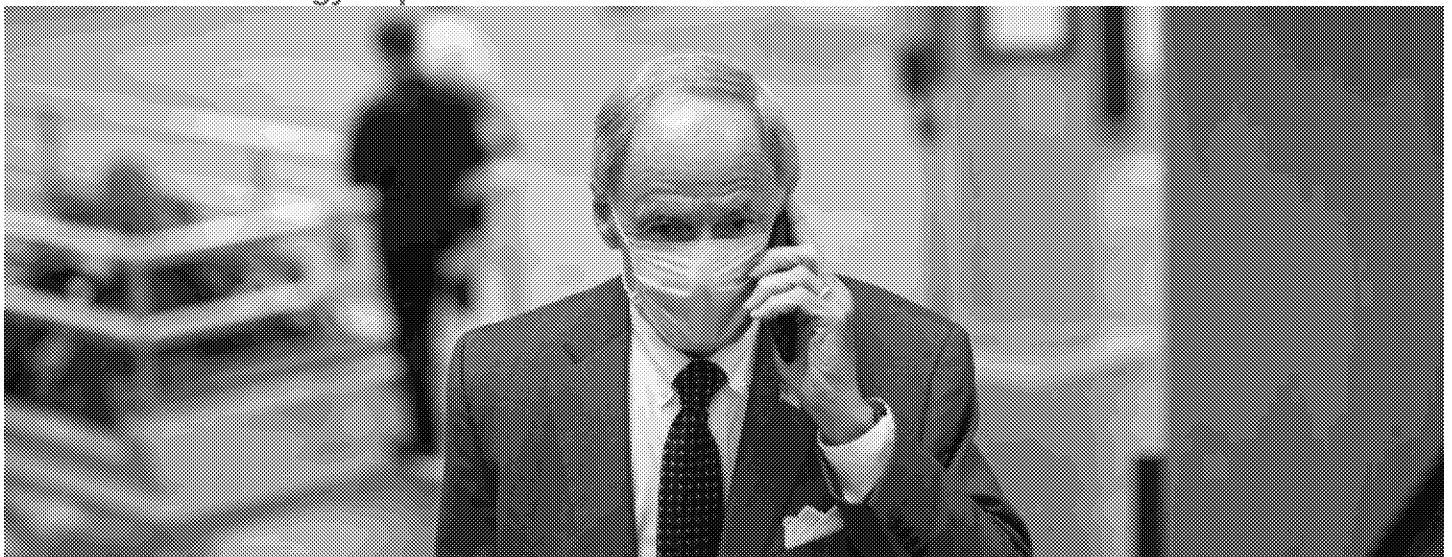
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**From:** Casso, Ruben <Casso.Ruben@epa.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 3:01 PM  
**To:** Robinson, Jeffrey <Robinson.Jeffrey@epa.gov>; Verhalen, Frances <verhalen.frances@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** Riddick, Nia <Riddick.Nia@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** EPA Wants to Convey 'Credible' Ethylene Oxide Risks to Public

<https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/epa-wants-to-convey-credible-ethylene-oxide-risks-to-public>

## Environment & Energy Report



Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) wears a protective mask near the Senate Subway at the U.S. Capitol in July 2020.

Photographer: Al Drago/Bloomberg via Getty Images

# EPA Wants to Convey ‘Credible’ Ethylene Oxide Risks to Public

Aug. 27, 2020, 2:40 PM

- EPA says conveying preliminary data irresponsible
- Lawmakers fret over ethylene oxide communication

The EPA wants to communicate reliable and accurate data about the risks that releases of the cancer-causing ethylene oxide gas pose to the public, an agency official said Thursday.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and other Democrats have repeatedly asked the Environmental Protection Agency to explain why it isn't taking steps to protect communities living in the proximity of commercial medical sterilizers and chemical plants that release ethylene oxide into the air.

The flammable, colorless gas with a faintly sweet odor is used to sterilize medical equipment, and as a building block for other chemicals to make a range of products, including antifreeze, textiles, plastics, detergents, and adhesives. The EPA classified it a carcinogen in 2016, prompting concern among people who live near plants that use and emit the gas.

"Risk communication should reflect the most current available information," Joseph Brazauskas Jr., the EPA's associate administrator for congressional and intergovernmental relations, wrote in a Thursday letter to Carper, the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Brazauskas said the EPA isn't yet ready to communicate the risks based on outdated 2014 data that was obtained under the National Air Toxics Assessment database. He said that assessment is a preliminary screening tool that informs state and local agencies about the potential risks, not actual ones.

In an Aug. 11 letter to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, Carper and Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) said they had "grave concern" over the "apparent failure of the EPA to communicate the health risks of ethylene oxide to Delaware residents, despite a report from the Office of the Inspector General directing the agency to do so."

The EPA Office of Inspector General in March had admonished the agency for communicating the health risks posed by ethylene oxide to officials and residents in only nine of the 25 biggest emitters since 2018, when it publicly recognized the need to do so.

"The OIG continues to insist that the agency to go these communities with inaccurate and outdated data and use that as the basis for public outreach, which is a poor reflection either on the attention the OIG is paying to the actual facts in this matter or on their judgment," Brazauskas wrote in the letter.

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